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# The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

No. 278. SEPTEMBER, 1930.

TRUTH — LIBERTY — RELIGION.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."
—Romans xii. : 18.

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## Editorial.

### The Lambeth Conference.

The Report of the seventh Lambeth Conference is now available. It is much more arresting and significant than its six predecessors. Whether we regard it as a "courageous and statesmanlike document" (Inquirer, Aug. 23rd) or as "nothing more than a half-hearted attempt to catch up with the turbulent current of modern life" (Daily Express Aug. 15th) will depend upon our view of what religion is and what it should do. For our own part we venture the suggestion that "courageous and statesmanlike" are not words to be applied to a collection of resolutions and pronouncements so full of ambiguity and compromise that they might mean anything or nothing. Birth Control is approved under the shelter of piety and is also condemned as an inducement to immorality. Divorce is frowned upon in one passage and smiled upon in the next. Perhaps it is too much to expect clear and definite pronouncements on these extremely difficult and controversial questions but surely we can reasonably expect from the leaders of the Church, something more than resolutions which can be interpreted in exactly as many ways as there are views on the subject? However we may be thankful that for the first time in history the Anglican Church has definitely tackled the burning questions of marriage, divorce, sex and birth control. It augurs well for the future. It shows at least a desire to "catch up with the turbulent current of modern life" and for this we should be grateful.

### Unitarianism From Trinitarian Pulpit.

Though we are now accustomed to the broad liberal pronouncements from nominally orthodox quarters we were hardly prepared for the following. According to the "News-Letter" (Aug. 25th) Canon Seaver, preaching in St. Bartholomews, Stranmillis, said "We do not to-day believe in Trinitarianism, in three Gods, and this rightly gives occasion for Unitarianism, all in one God, known to man in three aspects, Father, Son and Spirit." We cannot accept, without qualification, Canon Seaver's definition of Unitarianism as the acceptance of One God with three aspects (we hesitate to limit the number of the Diety's aspects and would much rather have the number one million and three than the number three) but we welcome his fearless utterance in the cause of religion. Needless to say, the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity as stated in the creeds and confessions, is no longer accepted unreservedly by the majority of orthodox leaders, but very few are anxious to publicly proclaim the fact. All the more refreshing then to Liberal Christians, are these occasional outbursts of pulpit candour.

* *

### Misrepresentation.

We are accustomed to the misrepresentation of our faith, so much so that we seldom think it worth while to make any move in the matter. One wonders if we as a Church are acting wisely in refusing to take account of the misrepresentation, some of it deliberate but most of it due to ignorance. It is extremely probable that our quiescent attitude is often taken as a sign of weakness.

It is not sufficient to assure ourselves that the misrepresentations are born of ignorance and folly; we should take steps to assure others of this significant fact. One of our Belfast ministers has received a letter, duly authenticated and evidently written in all good faith, in which the following passages occur. "The denomination to which you belong—does not acknowledge the divinity of Christ". "Unitarians say that Christ was not the Son of God" Ths writer also states that the celebration of Holy Communion in our churches is inconsistent with our belief.

Is it not time that as a Church we ceased to smile indulgently at such gross misrepresentation and commenced to re-state our message in clear language, paying particular attention to the unfounded charges made against our religious belief?

* *

**Declining Sunday Schools.**

At the recent Primitive Methodist Conference it was disclosed that the Church's Sunday School Union has lost 100,000 scholars and 10,000 teachers in the last 22 years. There must be something wrong with a man or woman who can contemplate these figures unmoved. Other denominations, including our own, have suffered similar losses. The actual figures differ but the proportions are almost identical. What of the next few generations of adult citizens? Can we look forward with confidence to an age of men and women who have not felt the influence of the Sunday School? Will any man maintain that increased facilities for so-called secular education will counter-balance the decreased interest in, and the rapidly declining numbers of, our Sunday Schools?

Here is the problem and a very grave one it is. We have no solution to offer. We can however value still higher the young people who still remain in our Sunday Schools, and appreciate still more the self-sacrificing teachers who make the work possible.

Perhaps some day attendance at Sunday School will become the recognised custom once again. Let us be ready for the revival and do all we can to stimulate it.

## The Divine Organist.

Inspiration works through human faculties; it does not supersede them. The analogies which connect Biblical religion with other religions are not all illusory. Healthy phenomena pass into morbid, lower into higher, "natural" into "supernatural" by the most gradual transitions. It is a mistake to set the "natural" and the "supernatural" in too sharp antithesis.

When the organist sits at the keyboard of his instrument he plays some passages soft and some loud; sometimes the notes that he gives forth are muffled, sometimes they are loud and clear. But the different parts of his playing are all upon the same instrument, and they all harmonize together. The very same note is alternately subdued and emphasised; and there are *crescendoes* and *diminuendoes* to connect the soft with the loud. So with Him who sits at the keyboard of the universe, and touches now with lighter and now with more constraining force the chords of the human spirit: the music which results is not broken and discordant, but it all blends into a subtle harmony, and the rising and the falling cadences alike contribute to the whole.

WILLIAM SUNDAY.

(*'The Oracles of God,'* pp. 99-101).

## The King's Maxims.

Teach me to be obedient to the rules of the game.

Teach me to distinguish between sentiment and sentimentality, admiring the one and despising the other

Teach me neither to proffer nor receive cheap praise.

If I am called upon to suffer, let me be like a well bred beast that goes away to suffer in silence.

Teach me to win if I may. If I may not win, then above all, teach me to be a good loser.

Teach me neither to cry for the moon nor over spilt milk.

SIX GOLDEN RULES HUNG IN THE LIBRARY OF KING GEORGE AT SANDRINGHAM.

# A Hundred Years of Subscription.

By the Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A.

## THE ANNUAL SYNOD LECTURE, 1930.

*(Concluded from last month.)*

As far back as 1647 the General Assembly passed an Act approving of the Westminster Confession as a necessary instrument of uniformity in religion and "as a special means for the more effectual suppressing of the many dangerous errors and heresies of these times." They took a very optimistic view of the workings of the Scottish mind who thought such an instrument would achieve its object. The history of Scottish Presbyterianism was in fact to prove one of many differences of view on various matters, a history of schism and secession.

In regard to theology we have all been made familiar by the poetry of Robert Burns with the existence of an Auld Licht and a New Licht partly towards the end of the 18th century, and in the latter half of the 19th century the rigid Calvinistic Formulae to which all ministers of the United Presbyterian Church had to subscribe, were relaxed by two Declaratory Acts in 1879 and 1892. These Standards were declared to be of "Human Composition," necessarily imperfect, and the cause of "difficulties and scruples" on the part of some called to declare their belief in them (1892). The Act of 1892 went so far as to declare that in subscribing to the Confession "Office-bearers of the Church were not committed to any principles inconsistent with liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment." It further stated that "diversity of opinion is recognised in this Church" on points in the Confession not entering into "the substance of the Reformed Faith," the Church retaining the right to determine what such points might be in any case that might arise, and so to preserve "sound doctrine," and with it unity and peace.

Apparently even this latitude did not satisfy everybody or fully express the effective mind of the Church for in 1894 still a third Act was passed by the General Assembly laying it down that the Statements of doctrine required by the Act of 1892 "are not thereby imposed upon any of the Church's Office-bearers as part of the Standards of the Church," and "in answering the questions and subscribing the Formula, they are entitled to do so in view of the said Act."

The conclusion of these Acts and Documents for the relief of private consciences appears to me to be that a minister or other Office-bearer of the United Presbyterian Kirk in publicly stating his assent to the Westminster Confession as agreeable to the Word of God, which he had to do at his ordination, was officially permitted to make mental reservations, and to avail himself of such latitude of interpretation as he might feel disposed to allow himself, leaving upon Church Courts the onus of determining, should he ever be arraigned for heresy, whether or not he was really departing from the substance of the Faith of the Reformed Churches.

At the Union of the United Presbyterian with the Free Kirk of Scotland at the opening of the 20th century this measure of liberty and diversity was secured by Act of Assembly to Office-bearers of the United Free Church. It acknowledges and condones at any rate liberty and the right of private judgment on what are regarded as "non-essentials" of the Faith, e.g., the Mosaic doctrine of Creation in six days, and who knows in exactly what other doctrines, which the Westminster Divines would certainly have affirmed without doubt to be of the substance of the Faith?

### The Free Kirk and Professor Smith.

A little further elucidation on this point may be got from reference to one of the most critical and notorious episodes in the history of the Free Church, the famous trial and expulsion of Professor William Robertson Smith for heresy.

Robertson Smith was one of the most precocious and brilliant Biblical Scholars Scotland has ever produced. He became Professor of Hebrew of the Old Testament at the Aberdeen Free College when only 22 years of age. He contributed the Article on the Bible to the 9th edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica, in which he denied the Mosaic authorship of the Book of

Deuteronomy, and adopted a theory of Divine inspiration which rendered the dogma of Scriptural inerrancy irrelevant and unnecessary.

He was in consequence arraigned for heresy and the trial which stirred all Scotland reached the General Assembly in 1877 and dragged on till the Assembly of 1880, Smith having been provisionally suspended from his Professorial duties. Meantime he had been offered the next vacant living by Balliol College, Oxford, if he would sign the Thirty-nine Articles, and a Professorship at Harvard University was kept waiting for him.

The Assembly of 1880 however reinstated him at Aberdeen, and then appeared his Article on "Hebrew Language and Literature" in the 11th edition of the Encyclopædia (1880). A fresh heresy hunt was set in full blast. He had distinguished and powerful support from eminent teachers in the Church, Dr. Alexander Whyte, the beloved minister, a Calvinist and Puritan to the back bone, declaring: "Fathers and Brethren, the world of mind does not stand still; and the theological mind will stand still at its peril."

Smith maintained that he was only following in the tradition of Biblical Criticism in which Calvin and Luther themselves had followed, but Dr. Rainy was against him, largely because he was disturbing the peace of the Presbyterian Zion, and he was finally removed from his Professorship in the Kirk.

Cambridge University took in the man driven out of a small Aberdeen College, and the Church lived to repent its treatment of Robertson Smith when at length the views for which he was sacrificed became the merest commonplaces of approved Christian Scholarship. His sacrifice was not in vain for in "identifying the new learning with heresy" the Church discovered that it had made "orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance," and entered upon an era of greater tolerance in which heresy-hunting was to become a discredited and opprobrious profession.

**The United Free Church.**

Subscription to the official formulae has been retained in the United Free Church of Scotland but it has become such a burden on the enlightened conscience and involved such disingenuousness and casuistry that one of the most revered and beloved leaders of that Church, the late Professor Denney, wrote thus in his book "Jesus and the Gospels" (1909):—

"The want of accord between the intellectual attitude of the Churches acting collectively and that of their individual members, is the cause not only of much discomfort and misunderstanding within, but of much scandal and reproach without. It seriously discredits the Church in the eyes of the world." What is wanted, he holds, is not merely a reduction or simplification of our elaborate Creeds" but "something radically different," "which will bind men to the Christian attitude to Christ and leave them free to discharge their intellectual and moral responsibilities with a conscience acknowledging no authority but that of God in whom they believe through Him" (p. 390).

He declares that men to-day do not and cannot understand the metaphysics of the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds in the original sense and in any case that is not what Christian life depends on, and it does not keep us true to Christ in mind and heart. The faith remains but creeds change and must be subject to revision. What the Church requires is a non-theological Confession. It would "bring an immense moral relief to many who are in the Church. It would remove obstacles which keep many outside of it. It would restore the Church's self-respect and its honour in the eyes of the world" (p. 410). And the noted Professor Moffatt in his book on "The Presbyterian Churches" writes that while many members of the Church would be content with the Westminster Confession as a symbol, under some formula or declaration which preserves their intellectual conscience, this conservative attitude fails to satisfy others. "The likelihood is that the problem of creed revision will become insistent before long" (p. 175).

At the Union of the two great branches of Scottish Presbyterianism in October, 1929, the First Moderator of the United Church referred to a revision and simplification of theological standards as one of the tasks awaiting the Church. They have, he held, to be brought into harmony

with modern knowledge and the new world view.

### III.—Conclusion.

I think this all too brief resumé of the theological restiveness and rebellion under the Confessional repressions of British Christianity shows the impossibility of securing by Subscription theological uniformity, stagnancy and finality, and its effects in promoting the unworthy arts of evasion, casuistry and duplicity—the lie in the soul. The need of tolerance, the demand for freedom to change, are all about us to-day with a growing impetus. There is no time to quote proof of this. As Dr. Martineau boldly and with good reason declared: "Preachers in their own place and office are the very last persons in the nation to be believed; the pulpit is as little trusted for sincerity as that appointed resort of lured advocacy, the bar. The primary necessity of a free people is an incessant change of thought and character. To suppose that this law of change in human society will make an exception in favour of religion, is a weak defiance of all experience" (Essays II., p. 178, 179).

From within these Churches voices have declared from the time of Jeremy Taylor, that Creeds can certainly not secure the moral standards of Christianity, nor those spiritual ideals of character and conduct which constitute Christlikeness; they have no effect at all in keeping the fellowship of the Church clear of those whose life and conduct are notoriously heretical judged by the test of Christian spirit and practice. And that is largely the most damaging argument to be brought against them.

In conclusion and from the stand-point of English Congregationalism, a religious community which, as he puts it: "Disallows the utility of creeds and articles of religion as a bond of union, and protests against subscription to any human formularies as a term of communion," we have Principal Garvie, a very distinguished figure writing that "Notwithstanding the disapproval of the imposition of any human standard, whether of faith or discipline, the Congregationalists are far more agreed in their doctrines and practices than any Church which enjoys subscription and enforces a human standard of orthodoxy." Unitarians have often made a like claim and no doubt the Quakers could corroborate from their experience.

I have proved the thesis that Subscription to Creeds fails to secure uniformity or to prevent heresy. I believe a hundred years of the history of Subscription justifies our policy and puts a reversion to such a principle and practice out of the question for us. We will never pass from the freedom wherewith Christ hath made us free under a yoke which has proved so galling to others and from which the finest minds cry out for deliverance.

But let us remember that a Non-Subscribing Church will perish and reduce its precious inheritance to a vain thing unless it can touch the deep spiritual springs in the heart of man and win his self-dedicated support and unwearying service.

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"We have seen that the cyclic scheme of physics presupposes a background outside the scope of its investigations. In this background we must find, first, our own personality, and then perhaps a greater personality. The idea of a universal Mind or Logos would be, I think, a fairly plausible inference from the present state of scientific theory; at least it is in harmony with it. But if so, all that our inquiry justifies us in asserting is a purely colourless pantheism. Science cannot tell whether the world-spirit is good or evil, and its halting argument for the existence of a God might equally well be turned into an argument for the existence of a Devil."

—Prof. Eddington.

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## Jesus Worship.

"'Jesus worship,' as a whole the distinctive feature alike of Protestant evangelicalism and Catholic sacramentalism—is not at all prominent in the theology of the first five or six centuries . . . .the separate and distinctive worship of Jesus in His manhood, with all the specially tender associations of His human name—the worship which gives its special sentiment to so much mediaeval and modern devotion—was but very little developed. We cannot, moreover, conceal from ourselves that this type of devotion, whether among Catholics or among Protestants, whether in mission, hymn-singing or in sacramental worship, has belonged to the emotional and devotional part of our manhood, rather than to the moral and rational."—Dr. Hart, (quoted by Bishop Gore).

# Evolution.

By Ullin.

In the Belfast Museum is an exhibit illustrative of evolution, and its presence there, educed a protest in the Belfast papers, because it was considered derogatory to "the Word of God," As expressed in the Shorter Catechism: "the work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of His power, in the space of six days, and all very good."

Surely, nowadays, it is only in Belfast that a newspaper controversy could be possible, on a subject which has become part and parcel of public opinion. The days were, when preachers knocked the dust out of their Bible cushions in their condemnation of Darwinism, "Read Darwin!" exclaimed a preacher after a long denunciation of him, "Why, I never read a word of him in my life." Thomas Cooper, known as the Chartist—a man, who because of the extent of his self-culture, and the good work he accomplished, was deserving of the greatest respect, and he was certainly worth listening to, a little old man, with long silver hair. Pulpits were opened to him, to lecture on "Darwinism examined." His zeal against evolution was because he regarded it as inseparable from Atheism. Darwin was not an atheist, and was surprised that a work of pure science should be confused with, what at that time more than the present, was considered an entirely separate field of investigation, viz:—theology and philosophy. Then it was overlooked that Darwin had merely put forward the results of his investigations, as a theory, to be accepted or rejected as people chose, a working hypothesis to help thinking people in their thinking. Simultaneously almost, Alfred Russell Wallace put forward the theory of evolution in connection with the mimicry of birds, an independent line from that of Darwin.

Darwin had some connection with Unitarianism through the Wedgwood family of Newcastle-under-Tyne, and the Shrewsbury Meeting House has a tablet to the effect that Charles Darwin in his young days, was taken there.

However, Darwin declined to consider theological implications in connection with his theory. At the same time it had an enormous influence on the thought of the age, and it was recognised that Darwin had had a glimpse of a great law, whatever the details of its method might be. Perhaps the majority of those connected with our congregations are familiar with the idea in a broad general sort of way, but, not so many could tell of the way in which the theory of evolution has gone through several changes, since Darwin's day, so that perhaps a brief survey of the whole subject might be helpful.

Mr. C. Jinarayadasa, M.A., Cambridge, has in brief form summarized the changes and progress of the teaching and it is to him I am indebted for the material of this summary. A diagram shows several ages, "periods of time," during which gradual changes have taken place in forms of life so that what were just the members of one family all of one type away back in the lowest state of the ages, the Eocene, have come up into widely different species of the present day. The ages during which modifications have taken place are named Eocene, Oligocene, Miocene, Pliocene, Present Age. All these are like shelves one above the other and on the lowest shelf is one family Condylarthra; but, on the top shelf: Elephant, Rhinoceros, Horse, Ox, Deer, Giraffe, Camel, Hippopotamus, Boar.

Lamarck, a Frenchman, came forward with a theory, Adaptation. In the bottom shelf family one of the members had to stretch his neck every day to get at food over his head. In consequence his offspring had a tendency to stretch their necks, and that went on, so that there is the giraffe of today. Another of the family developed a tendency to butting and horns developed along that line, hence the deer. A four-legged land creature was chased into the water, and had to adapt itself, and in course of ages gradually lost its legs and thus the whale. It seemed reasonable enough; but. Lamarck's theory broke down because it wasn't borne out by facts, e.g. Chinese women for ages tried to keep their feet small, but their babies insisted on being born with quite normal feet. The same in other ways with various tribes.

At the same time Lamarck was right that use and disuse do bring about modifications, e.g. a muscle can be enlarged by use, but only within limits.

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Darwin, an Englishman, came forward with his theory of Natural Selection. He made use of a fact Lamarck had brushed aside, but on this insignificant thing Darwin based his theory, in nature there is a tendency to variation, no two leaves on a branch are the same. These variations arise quite spontaneously, and some are more helpful to the life of the organism, than others, in the general struggle for existence. In course of ages nature steadily selects, until entirely new species are produced. Nature adds on to the variation, and passes on what has been acquired. On this supposition Darwinism rests. Later developments in Biology show that it can no longer be held. Angust Weismann, a German, showed that "the transmission of acquired characters is impossible," and he concentrated on the life history of cells. There is practically one cell in the human body, "the permanent atom" we may call it, which sets the pace to all other cells and decides the temperament of the body,—that is what it amounts to.

William Bateson of Cambridge, in 1894 challenged Darwin's conception. Darwin would have made "a chain of evidence," Bateson shows that nature takes leaps, that there is a discontinuity between species. At that rate there might be a good many "missing links." In 1886 De Vries, a Dutchman, started investigations with the "evening primrose," and his theory is called "mutation." Darwin knew these facts but saw no significance in them. "A drunkard's child does not inherit drunkenness, but "a weakness of structure." A child of genius does not inherit its father's acquirements. Mendel, an Austrian, a Roman Catholic priest in 1865, six years after publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species," published results of many experiments in the crossing of peas. He died in 1884. No one knew that Mendel had given the death-blow to Darwinism; but, three botanists in 1900, De Vries, the Dutchman just mentioned, Correns, a German, and Tschermak, an Austrian, who had all discovered certain novel facts in hybridrising, simultaneously brought to light Mendel's paper, and saw that Mendel had discovered it all before them, and explained it with an illuminating theory. It is Mendelism that now holds the field in Evolution, and by it new factors are being discovered in plants, animals and man. The process is not that of adding new powers, but of releasing powers normally suppressed. Darwin's successors, while they do not take his philosophy, yet turn to him for his facts so carefully observed and registered.

We need not deduce from the facts placed before us "a materialistic or mechanical conception of nature." "The more the marble wastes the more the statue grows,"—that is what Evolution now means and Paul magnificently expressed the idea in the words: "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," "waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God."

## A Gentleman Calls.

Dr. Phillip Brooks, the famous American bishop, was greatly beloved by children. To one family of little people he was especially attached.

One day when he called to see them a strange maid opening the door did not know the doctor, and merely took a message to the nursery to say that a gentleman had come to see the children. At once they were told to come and leave their games and "be tidied up to go downstairs."

Protests were of no avail. The faces of the little rebels were washed, their hair was brushed, stiffly-starched frocks were thrust on to stiffly-resisting bodies, and they finally descended, in great indignation, to see this unknown gentleman who was responsible for all the trouble. The eldest of the party opened the drawing-room door, and then came a glorious change. As they caught sight of their beloved bishop they cried in tones of mingled scorn and ecstasy, "Gentleman indeed! Why it's Dr. Brooks!" and rushed into his arms.

—From "The Children's Newspaper."

## Prayer.

If your prayer does not come from your heart it will not go to God's heart and it it does not bring you near to God, so that if you are speaking to Him, you have simply wasted your breath. You have done worse than nothing, for in all likelihood you have daubed your conscience over with the notion that you have prayed, and so you have even done yourself serious harm by a flattering deceit. Oh, that God would save you from being so foolish

—SPURGEON.

## Why I am a Protestant.

By the Rev. J. Shaw Brown

(Reprinted from "The Down Recorder, July 26th, 1930).

Rev. J. Shaw Brown, in the course of an address at Clough, said: I am a Protestant because it is natural for me to be a Protestant, but I do not blame a Catholic because it is natural for him to be a Catholic. None of us can shake off entirely the past which has made us, and it is a good Protestant principle to allow each man and woman to remain in his own experience and tradition without prejudice or persecution. I am a Protestant not only because I was born a Protestant, but also because I belong to a country where Protestantism is the national religion. Protestantism is part of the English constitution. There is a short paragraph in the 37th article of the Church of England which makes Protestantism not only the religion of the Church of England, but also part of the very constitution of England. The paragraph is this: "The Bishop of Rome, i.e., the Pope, hath no jurisdiction in the realms of England." That is the charter of the Church of England, and it is the great safeguard of Protestant liberty.

Irish Protestants seem to me to be more keenly alive to this national issue than most English Protestants. They feel that Protestantism is something larger than merely belonging to a church; it is a question of loyalty to the English throne. Before England could become Roman Catholic the English constitution would have to be altered, and in such an undertaking the Pope would have to reckon not only with the orthodox in the Church of England, but with the Nonconformists in the Free Churches of England, and the great body of loyal Englishmen and Irishmen inside and outside all the Churches. The fact is, Protestantism in England is not simply a matter of church membership, but a great


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political and national issue. Henry VIII. decided that issue in the 16th century by making the King and not the Pope supreme in England. The Protestant doctrine of the royal supremacy made the Church of England a National Church instead of a Roman Church.

Henry of England and Martin Luther in Germany were nothing more than a great revolution that was to change the face of Europe. Roman Catholic apologists sometimes say that Martin Luther was an irreligious monk, who wished to forsake his vows and marry a nun, and that it was merely lust that made Henry VIII. revolt from Rome. It is hardly wise or just to accept the estimate of any man's character from his avowed enemies. But whatever the personal character of these individual leaders may have been the significant fact remains that they were the instruments of God in a great revolution that has brought light and liberty to the people.

Protestantism was a political as well as a Church movement away from the ideas of the Middle Ages. Nations as well as the Church were moving away from the idea of Empire. You may observe this if you consider how in modern politics the different nations have attained an independence and individuality unknown in the Middle Ages. No single nation is now strong enough to conquer the whole of Europe. Germany in the great war was a belated attempt to secure world-empire—perhaps the last attempt. That modern institution, the League of Nations, is looking in quite another direction. The object is to protect the rights and independence of all the nations —the smaller nations as well as the bigger nations. Internationalism, not world empire, is the way to world unity.

And as it is with the nations so also is it with the Church. A world Church is as impossible in modern society as a world empire. Churches, like the nations, have developed an independence and an individuality undreamt of in the Middle Ages, and no Church is either good enough or wise enough to embrace the whole of Christendom. Even the Roman Church with all its power and historic background is now only one among other Churches.

The story is told of Sir Michael Costa, who at one of the Crystal Palace rehearsals amidst the playing of the great orchestra he suddenly rapped with his baton on the desk and said "Flageolet is not playing." The flageolet is only one little instrument among so many, but the conductor knew that its note was missing. One little sect of Non-Subscribing Presbyterians may be only the flageolet, but it is needed as well as the bassoon or the big drum if the great orchestra of religious worship is to give forth the still sad music of humanity. The sound of many voices, which no man can number continually rises up to heaven from the worshipping earth, and as they ascend like the sound of many waters they blend into one great chorus in which the singing of the Roman mass and the beat of the Orange drum have a part to play in the worship of the Invisible Church which is the Holy Catholic Church of Humanity.

## Bishops' Decision.

At the conclusion of the Encyclical of the Anglican Bishops, summarising the report of the Lambeth Conference, there is this statement, the implications of which must be wide and far-reaching: "It may even be necessary to the Church that men in it should hold and expound different opinions in order that the Church as a whole should have the whole truth, even as the rays of many colours which the spectrum shows combine to make the light of the sun." But is not this, the fundamental principle of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church?


# The Inquirer and Christian Life.

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## The Mystery Religions.

Christianity was not a light which suddenly broke in on a darkened world, as is often maintained.

The peoples of the Mediterranean civilizations were being prepared for Christianity centuries before Christianity appeared, and a large part of this preparation was done by the Mystery Religions.

While it is an exaggeration to say, as some writers do, that Christianity was just one more mystery religion competing with the others, it is nevertheless true that the Mystery Religions did much to produce an atmosphere in which Christianity could flourish.

The Mystery Religions in Egypt, Greece and Rome helped to prepare the soil for the new seed.

They arose and flourished in response to the innate, unquenchable desire for salvation, a desire implanted in man from time immemorial. They promised salvation to their converts. By means of certain mysterious rites and ceremonies, viewing sacred objects and handling others, eating and drinking specially prepared food and drink supposed to be consecrated and possessed of magical properties, repeating special incantations after a priest and so on, by these means a convert could secure the special protection of God in this life and be assured of happiness in the next life.

### Initiation Ceremonies.

The initiate could divulge none of these things to the outsider, hence the name "Mystery." A mystery religion was one with jealously guarded secret rites and ceremonies by which salvation was attained. Consequently we do not know all that happened at the impressive initiation ceremonies though the discovery of the Initiation Hall at Eleusis (the Greek Archaeological Society discovered this about fifty years ago) together with inscriptions on vases, monuments and tombs, have made it possible for scholars to reconstruct the secret rites and ceremonies of the Eleusinian Mystery Religion.

All that took place appealed to the emotions and not to the intellect. As Aristotle says "The initiated do not learn anything so much as feel certain emotions and are put into a certain frame of mind." Among the things that put the initiates into a 'certain frame of mind,' as Aristotle calls it, were sudden alternations of brilliant light and complete darkness, the performing of a religious drama, sacred movements particularly dancing, the droning incantations of the priest, the revealing of sacred images and so on.

All this elaborate ritual and ceremonial played on the emotions of the converts, lifting them out of themselves and bringing them into mystical communion with the Deity.

In this way they obtained salvation. They had been initiated into all the mysteries and were thenceforth under the protection of the Deity.

### Jesus and Sacraments.

Modern scholars are agreed that much of the Christian ritual and symbolism comes, either directly or indirectly, from the Mystery Religions. The Gospels sanction none of the ritual that is part of orthodox Christianity. Jesus is the negation of ritual and ceremonial. He was the incarnation of naturalness, simplicity and sincerity. Ritualistic Christianity is completely foreign to the religion taught by Jesus. Jesus instituted no mysterious sacraments. All the sacraments belonging to orthodox Christianity and popularly supposed to be peculiar to it, were known centuries before Jesus lived. Holy Communion and Baptism, to mention two of the chief sacraments, were an integral part of the Mystery Religions. A convert to the Mystery Religion was cleansed of his sin by baptism and brought into communion with the Deity by eating and drinking consecrated bread and wine.

It is true that Paul, the first Christian leader to insist on the importance of these two sacraments, charged them with a new spiritual significance, but in essence they were the same. The one cleansed the convert of sin and the other brought him into communion with God.

It may well be that Christianity pure and undefiled, that is to say the religion of Jesus as distinct from the ritualistic theological system that has been built upon it and which differs from it as much as a piece of cut glass differs from a diamond, would have made little headway without the mysterious symbols, the sacraments so essential to salvation, the priest as mediator between God and man and other things so familiar to the Mediterranean peoples of

the first few centuries of the Christian Era.

**The Kernel and the Shell.**

If this be so, then the trappings of Christianity, many of them borrowed from the Mystery Religions, have served a good purpose. The danger is that the decorations are liable to be mistaken for the thing decorated. Sacraments, ritual and ceremonial may be a help to religion but they can never be a substitute for religion.

Some day perhaps we may know exactly how much the Christian theological system with its accompanying sacraments, rites and ceremonies, owes to the Mystery Religions. At present we are in the dark as to the exact amount of the indebtedness.

We are not however in the dark regarding the value of these accretions round the teaching of Jesus. Jesus taught by implication, by the very fact that he did not consider them worthy of mention, that they contained no inherent value.

Paul, though obviously influenced by the Mystery Religions, was under no delusion regarding secret rites and ceremonies when he wrote, "If I understand all mysteries and all knowledge—and have not love, I am nothing."

The day that Christianity bases both its teaching and its practice on this famous passage will indeed be a red-letter day in the history of humanity. It will go down to history as the time when men threw over the whole Christian theological system and accepted the pure undefiled religion of Jesus. S.P.W.

## If the Universe should fall upon a man.

Man is but a reed, the feeblest thing in Nature. But then he is a reed that thinks.

It needs no gathering up of powers of Nature to crush him: a vapour, a drop of water will do it. But if the whole universe should fall upon him and crush him man would yet be more noble than that which slew him, because he knows he is dying, and the universe knows it not.

Therefore it is that our whole dignity lies but in this—the faculty of Thinking. Let us think well. —PASCAL.

## Obituaries.

**Mr. Reginald E. M. Scott. Dunmurry.**

The congregation here has lost, in the death, on 14th August, of Mr. Reginald E. M. Scott, a popular and useful member. He was the younger son and last surviving son of the late Rev. Thomas H. M. Scott, M.A., the well-known minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Dunmurry, who died 35 years ago. Never of a robust constitution, the late R. E. M. Scott, had been in poor health for the past year, and recently underwent an operation in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, which failed to remove his fatal disease, and he passed peacefully away on the date mentioned, and was interred in the family burying ground, Dunmurry, where his father and mother lie buried. The sincere sympathy of the congregation and many other friends goes out to his widow, a Dublin lady, and to his married sisters, Mrs. Walter Wood and Mrs. Sydney Round, who are living near Dudley.

* *

**Mr. W. J. Hobson,**
**Auckland, New Zealand.**

Mr. W. J. Hobson passed away peacefully on June 23rd, aged almost 80, and with him goes a link with the early days of our Church. He came to New Zealand nearly 60 years ago from Saintfield in N. Ireland, and, though brought up in the strictest Presbyterianism, joined our Church soon after it was built. He and his family were regular attenders. Silent and retiring, he took no active part in its management; but his sons and daughters, now scattered over various parts of the North Island, played a very important part in the upbuilding of the congregation, and still retain their connection. To them we extend our deepest sympathy. —From the "Auckland Unitarian Church Calendar" for July, 1930.

## Secret Known to Child.

There is death in the thoughts of men. The world is one wide riddle to them, darker and darker as it draws to a close.

But the secret of it is known to the child, and the Lord of Heaven and Earth is most to be thanked in that He has hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them unto babes.

JOHN RUSKIN.

## Women's League.

**Women's League, Moneyrea.**

The members of the local branch were kindly invited to hold their regular meeting at Harrietvale, where they were entertained to tea by Mrs. Hugh Frame, on July 4th. There was a full gathering of members present. After the meeting, the gentlemen were allowed to join in, and all thoroughly enjoyed the social evening, thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Frame. On Saturday, July 26th, the members of the above branch held their first annual excursion; the party left Moneyrea shortly after 8 a.m. by bus, and travelled from Belfast to Larne by train and from thence to Stranraer by boat. As a strong gale was blowing all the morning some doubted the stability of their sea legs; the sea was rough and the steamer both pitched and rolled and—Moneyrea seemed very far away, yet in spite of fears, we reached Stranraer without any serious casualties. After lunch the party motored out to Castlekennedy to see the old castle, lakes, water gardens, plantations and fine lawns, all of which were beautiful and worth more than one visit. A little weary of the miles we walked, we returned to Stranraer to tea, and subsequently we explored the quaint old town which we found to be very interesting. We were all aboard again at 7-30 p.m. The return sail was very pleasatn, and as the sea was calm and visibility good, great interest was taken in passing headlands and ships. We arrived in Moneyrea at 11-45 p.m., after a very happy day.

## His Little Daughter.

The morning came but my servant appeared not.

Doors were all open, the water was not drawn from the well; my servant had been out all night. My morning meal was not ready; my clothes were all lying unfolded.

As the hours passed my anger grew, and I devised hard punishments for him. At the last he came, late in the morning, and bowed low.

I called out angrily: "Go forth from my presence and never see my face again."

He looked at me, and remained silent, and then said in a low husky voice: "My little daughter died last night." And without another word went to his daily task.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

## Report.

**Moneyrea.**—On Sunday, July 20th, we held our Sunday School Anniversary Service, which was conducted by our Minister who delivered an appropriate sermon on "The beauty of flowers and the beauty of character." The attendance was good, and the collection, in aid of Sunday School Funds was above the average. The children sang very well indeed. Miss Doyle presided at the organ. On Wednesday, August 6th, members of the Sunday School went for the day to Ballywalter by buses, arriving at the Ardmore Café in time for lunch, after which there was an exodus to the sands. But all too soon, the football match was stepped, the glory of morning had departed, rain interfered. All were thankful that the organisers had made provision for such a contingency. A large room was at our disposal behind the Cafe. When tea was over, the weather improved sufficiently for us to venture forth again and sports were resumed on the sands until the hour of departure. On the return journey, the buses went round the coast via Millisle. In organising the different excursions, hearty thanks are due to Messrs. T. J. Millen, Robbie Millen; Miss B. Kennedy, and Miss Davies. On Saturday, July 19th, members of the choir travelled by bus to Portrush, where after lunch they dispersed to see the sights; some went as far as the Giant's Causeway, others stayed about the town and saw a carnival procession which delighted everybody. The party boarded the bus at 5 o'clock and proceeded along the Antrim Coast road, arriving at Garron Tower for tea. After spending an hour on that beautiful headland the homeward journey was resumed, stopping in Larne to have a look round, and then, made straight for Moneyrea, which was reached shortly after 10 p.m. Everyone enjoyed the fine weather and the long run.

MARRIAGE.

WILLIAMS—BEGG.—On August 4th, 1930, at the Wilbraham Road Unitarian Church, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester, by the Rev. D. J. Williams, assisted by the Rev. W. M'Mullan, the Rev. J. A. Williams, B.A., B.D. to Frances Barbara Begg, B.SC., younger daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Begg, of Chorlton-cum-Hardy.

## The Wonder of Life Unfolding.

There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, while this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning, endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been and are being evolved.

Charles Darwin's last words in the Origin of Species.

He that is content with his poverty is wonderfully rich.

Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the Divinity in man.

SHELLEY.

* *

It is lawful to pray to God that we be not led into temptation; but not lawful to skulk from those that come to us.

R. L. S.

# Congregations of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

**Belfast.**—First Church, Rosemary Street, 11-30 and 7, Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A.

" All Souls', Elmwood Avenue, 11-30 and 7, Rev. Sydney P. Whitehouse.

" Mountpottinger Unitarian Church, 11-30 and 7, Rev. J. H. Ewbank, B.A., B.D.

" York Street Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 11-30 and 7, Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A.

**Dublin.**—Unitarian Church, Stephen's Green, 12 and 7, Rev. E. Savell Hicks, M.A.

**Antrim.**—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. George V. Crook.

**Ballee.**—Presbyterian Meeting House, 11-30 a.m., Rev. Joseph H. Bibby.

**Ballycarry.**—Presbyterian Old Meeting House, 12 noon, and 7 p.m. occasional Sundays. Rev. William G. Marsden.

**Ballyclare.**—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. A. M. Bell, B.A.

**Ballyhemlin.**—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. John Barron.

**Ballymoney.**—The Remonstrant Meeting House, 12-15 p.m., Rev. Felix Holt, B.A.

**Banbridge.**—First Presbyterian Church, 12 noon and 6-30 p.m., Rev. Percival Godding.

**Cairncastle.**—Old Meeting House. 12-15 p.m.

**Clough.**—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Meeting House, 11-30 a.m.—Rev. J. Shaw Brown.

**Comber.**—Unitarian Church, 12 noon and 6-30 (October to April), Rev. J. Glynne Davies.

**Cork.**—The Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, and 7 p.m., Rev. W. A. Weatherall.

**Crumlin.**—The Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Evening Service monthly, 7-15, Rev. G. Price-Jones.

**Downpatrick.**—First Presbyterian Church, 11-30 a.m., Supply.

**Dromore.**—Unitarian Church, 12 noon and 6 p.m., Rev. Alfred Davison.

**Dunmurry.**—First Presbyterian Non-Subscribing Church, 1 noon, Rev. John A. Kelly.

**Glenarm.**—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. J. A. Miskimmin, B.A.

**Greyabbey.**—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 12 noon (6 p.m. November to February), Rev. W. H. T. Tilson, M.A.

**Holywood.**—First Presbyterian Church, 11-30 a.m and 7 p.m., Rev. Edgar Lockett.

**Killinchy.** — Remonstrant Presbyterian Church, 12-15 p.m., and 7 p.m., occasional Sundays, Rev. David J. Williams.

**Larne.**—Old Presbyterian Church (Unitarian), 11-30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Rev. James Kennedy and Rev. John Begg.

**Moira.**—First Presbyterian Church, 3-15 p.m., Rev. Percival Godding.

**Moneyrea.**—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church 12 o'clock noon.—Rev. J. Dare Davies.

**Newry.**—First Presbyterian Church, 12 noon and 7 p.m. (October to May), Rev. G. J Slipper.

**Newtownards.**—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 3-30 p.m., Rev. W. H. T Tilson, M.A

**Rademon.**—First Kilmore Remonstrant Church, 12-15 p.m., Rev. John J. Magill, B.A.

**Raloo.**—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Rev. John M'Cleery.

**Templepatrick.**—Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Rev. Alfred Turner.

**Ravara.**—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church. 3-30 p.m., last Sunday in month, Rev. J. Dare Davies.

**Warrenpoint.**—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church.—Services fortnightly, October to May, at 3-30 p.m.—Rev. G. J. Slipper.

**Will Ministers and Church Secretaries please advise the Editor of any mistakes in the above details**

# Ulster Unitarian Christian Association.

Hon. Secretary—REV. G. J. SLIPPER, 7 TREVOR HILL, NEWRY.

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OF

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